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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Read by H.A.
5 Sept 61

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4 September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Recent events provide pretty clear evidence that Khrushchev intends using military force, or the threat thereof, to gain his ends in Berlin. He has raised his ante by progressively isolating West Berlin, by retaining in service several hundred thousand men due for discharge, and by reverting to atomic testing.

Thus far our own defense efforts have been deliberately kept in a low key and at a comparatively normal tempo. I have a strong feeling that the moment has come to shift into a higher gear.

On August 31 you sent a memorandum to Secretary McNamara asking him for recommendations on expansion of our military forces in the light of the events noted above. I understand they will be ready for you on Thursday. The decision which you take will be an extremely important one, and it seems to me that you will, therefore, want to touch all the bases and establish a clear record. You might consider some such scenario as follows:

On Thursday, discuss the Defense recommendations in a small group of principals including Secretary McNamara, Secretary Rusk, General Lemnitzer and perhaps Dean Acheson. When you have decided what you are inclined to approve, ask the Joint Chiefs for a formal recommendation on the military program. As a final wrap-up, obtain the advice of the National Security Council in a regularly convened session at the start of the following week, in which the CIA would lead off with the best available estimate of Soviet intentions and capabilities.

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Mr. Bundy rightly points out that the military program should be closely tied in to the political program which still has gaps. It may be possible to fill in these gaps concurrently with the consideration of the Defense program.

Maxwell D. Taylor
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